



NEWS RELEASE

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Cornell Brooks Leaves Institute for Social Justice Jerome C. Harris Named Interim Head

Brooks to Be Recognized June 11 at NJISJ Annual Awards Gala

NEWARK, NJ – Cornell William Brooks, President and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ), has announced he will leave the Institute to become president of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP). Jerome C. Harris, Chief Operating Officer for the Shiloh Community Development Corporation, has been named interim CEO and head of NJISJ.

“The entire NJISJ community congratulates Cornell and sincerely thanks him for his truly distinguished service in promoting social justice in our state,” said Douglas Eakeley, Chairman of the NJISJ Board of Trustees. “Although we are sad that an individual who has meant so much to our organization and to the residents of this state is moving on, we are proud to have been his home for so many years, and we are fortunate that our Board of Trustees, staff and loyal supporters share an unflagging commitment to do even more as we move forward together.”

Brooks has headed the organization since 2007 and during that time the Institute has won landmark direct service and policy reform victories. “These victories have positioned and obligated NJISJ to accomplish even more over the years ahead. Building on the foundation of Cornell’s hard work and vision, we are confident that we will continue our legacy of reforming our state’s justice systems, increasing employment opportunities through innovative initiatives, and removing barriers to social equality through programs such as the Social Covenant Bonds project – a concept conceived and incubated by Cornell.”

The Board selected Jerome C. Harris as interim President and CEO of NJISJ while a search is conducted for a permanent replacement for Brooks. Harris, Chief Operating Officer for the Shiloh Community Development Corporation and a member of the NJISJ Board, has more than 40 years of professional experience in government, organization development, community and economic development, public policy analysis and advocacy. He has taught at both the graduate and undergraduate level. He is currently a member of the NJISJ Board and chair of its Strategic Initiatives Committee.

“Cornell has provided extraordinary leadership to the Institute, and I see it as my mission to help maintain the momentum we have established,” said Harris. “We play a vital role in important initiatives and public policy discussions and we are uniquely positioned as a social justice ‘think and do tank.’ Our workforce development and training programs have delivered education and professional training to over 700 low-income, hard-to-employ residents and we have placed more than 500 of our graduates in higher-

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wage jobs. NJISJ's legal program has succeeded in driving down juvenile detention rates in New Jersey to historic lows and worked to help found the state's first community court. Our equal justice team passed sweeping criminal justice reform legislation that The New York Times called a model for the rest of the nation. We are deeply committed to continuing our pioneering work in social justice."

Previously, Harris was Director of the Department of Housing and Economic Development for the City Of Trenton; Executive Director of the Urban and Public Policy Institute at Rowan University of New Jersey; Assistant Secretary of State and Assistant State Treasurer during the Florio administration; Essex County Administrator; City Administrator for the City of Plainfield; Vice President for Government Affairs for the Metro Newark Chamber of Commerce; and Chairman of the New Jersey Black Issues Convention from 2006 to 2012. Currently he is an adjunct Professor in the Political Science Department at Rowan University teaching courses in government and public administration. He is a member of the board of the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute, and is a Deacon at Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton.

Brooks's service at NJISJ will be recognized on Wednesday, June 11 at the organization's Annual Awards Gala at The Park Savoy, 236 Ridgedale Avenue in Florham Park, which will honor real estate investor Paul V. Profeta, attorney, educator, musician and community advocate Junius W. Williams, and developer Ron Beit.

"I will miss the cause-driven people I have worked with for the past seven years at NJISJ. They pursue social justice in ways people can see feel in their daily lives whether it is in workforce development programs, fighting to keep children out of adult prisons, ensuring public safety, or social impact financing to leverage assets of communities that are deemed by others to be resource-empty," said Brooks. "The morally ambitious rigor of the people I have met at the Institute has been impressive. It is rare to find people who bring such a high degree of unapologetic heart commitment to their work. The New Jersey Institute of Social Justice is a very special place."

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice is a Newark-based urban research and advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of New Jersey's cities and their neighborhoods, families and individual residents. The Institute believes that urban areas of New Jersey, especially Newark, hold remarkable potential to act as regionally competitive economic engines, while providing resilient, vital and attractive communities to their residents. The Institute identifies, analyzes and addresses the underlying causes of social and economic disparities and challenges the barriers that constrain cities and their residents from achieving their fullest potential. For more information, email justice@njisj.org or visit www.njisj.org.

"Social justice should be the underlying goal of all humanity."

- Alan V. Lowenstein, Esq., Founder, NJISJ

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